2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

142 Dr. Dobson, in noticing a marked case of this kind, drew attention to the fact of its differing from steatopyga, thereby distinguishing them in this respect from Hottentots.

2. Albinism and polydactylism are unknown, and only one case of erythrism, and that of a faint type, has been observed, or is known to the natives of our acquaintance.[1]

3. No instance appears of obliquity of vision, of cleft palate, absence of teeth, or of supernumerary teeth, and only one of prognathism[2] and hare-lip respectively. Cases of "Darwin's point" in the ear are constantly met with.

●158 **Pathology.**—1. No idiots, maniacs, or lunatics have ever yet been observed among them, and this is not because those so [57] afflicted are killed or confined by their fellows, for the greatest care and attention are invariably paid to the sick, aged, and 732 helpless. Two or three cases of hunchback and lateral curvature of the spine have come under notice, but instances of the kind are evidently very rare.

164 2. It has often been observed, that though the Andamanese waste away very rapidly in sickness, they regain flesh with equal facility when convalescent; but, nevertheless, they possess so little vital power, that they readily succumb to diseases against which others usually struggle successfully:[3] indeed, they appear to suffer as much, if not more, than individuals of alien races from the febrile disorders—mainly attributable to malaria, so prevalent throughout these islands—which frequently lay the foundation of chest complaints, from which they rarely recover.

3. Pulmonary consumption and other forms of pectoral disease are among the chief causes of mortality among these tribes.[4] These disorders do not appear to be confined to, or to be more prevalent in, certain districts, but there is little doubt that they have been most frequent amongst those living in the homes provided for their benefit in and near our settlements in South Andaman.[5]

[1] In no other particular does this case appear to differ from the rest.

[2] As Professor Owen, F.R.S., truly remarks, "their prognathism is not more than is found in most of the Southern Asiatic peoples, and, indeed, in the lower orders of men in all countries, and may be due or relate to the prolonged sucking of the plastic infant." (*Vide* "Brit. Asso. Reports," 1861.)

[3] This not only refers to maladies introduced by the alien population, such as measles, venereal diseases, &c., but to those complaints from which they suffered prior to the establishment of the settlement.

[4] In reference to complaints of this nature, it may interest some to know that Dr. De Jongh's cod liver oil was largely used in the homes, and with considerable benefit to the patients, several recoveries having resulted therefrom. From inquiry it would seem that cases of constipation are comparatively rare, and that diarrhœa is almost the habitual state of their excretory functions.

[5] As this circumstance was traced to the system of giving them clothes to be worn at our various stations, and when visited by Europeans, it was deemed advisable to modify the regulation and to supply them only with drawers, leaving the upper part of the body exposed. A marked improvement in the general health resulted from this change.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

possible are required before we can speak with certainty regarding the extent, limits, and conditions of heredity among this race; but it has been noticed that, as a general rule, they have excellent memories, especially on those subjects in which the intellects of their ancestors have been consciously or unconsciously exercised or cultivated in the savage state. The following passage will afford an illustration of the intelligence displayed by these people on such subjects. It is taken from the late Mr. Kurz's Report on the Vegetation of the Andaman Islands:—

"While I was in the Andamans I was in the habit of consulting people (convicts) from the most different parts of India for the native names of the plants. As a general result, I may state that the Burmans were best acquainted with the flora of the Andamans, but they are by no means equal to the Andamanese in accuracy and certainty of determination. While the Burmans were obliged continually to cut into the bark to recognise the trees, the Andamanese readily gave their names, and I could rely upon their statements, which was not the case at all with those of the Burmese."

16. Instances have been observed among them of individuals possessing strong wills and vivid powers of imagination: as a race they do not appear to be subject to trances, illusions, or somnambulism, but, like many other savages, they place implicit faith in dreams, shaping their conduct in superstitious conformity to the warning or advice supposed to have been conveyed therein.

Magic and Witchcraft.—1. There are, however, certain individuals in these tribes, known as *ôko-paiad-* (*lit.*, a dreamer), who are credited with the possession of supernatural powers—such as second sight, expressed by the term *àramūga-târàbanga-*, —and of a mysterious influence over the fortunes and lives of their neighbours. It is thought that they can bring trouble, sickness, and death upon those who fail to evince their belief in them in some substantial form;[1] they thus generally manage to obtain the best of everything, for it is considered foolhardy to deny them, and they do not scruple to ask for any article to which they may take a fancy.

2. These quasi-seers are invariably of the male sex, and it sometimes even happens that a young boy is looked upon as a "coming" *ôko-paiad-*, their position being generally in the first instance attained by relating an extraordinary dream, the details

[1] This reminds one somewhat of the disease makers of Tanna (New Hebrides), who are supposed to cause disease and death by burning *nahak* (rubbish, principally refuse of food), and who are propitiated by continual presents. The practice of burning beeswax, in order to cause annoyance to an enemy, will be mentioned under "Superstitions," paragraph 13.

3: Temple G-5 (1901) 1903 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

or severe injury. However, like many of the lower mammals, they recover quickly from illness when they overcome it. 164

Idiocy, insanity and natural deformities are rare among them. Epilepsy is however recognised and homicidal mania occurs sometimes with concomitants of insanity, such as eating raw flesh or earth and drinking the blood of the victim. 158 732

An unintentional artificial depression of the forehead and sides and top of the skull is produced in some women, chiefly among the Onges, caused by using a strap to carry loads on the back when young. [304]

No parts of the body are intentionally pierced, injured, or deformed for the wearing of ornaments and other purposes, though the skin is extensively tatooed.

The statements at my disposal as to the relative prevalence of diseases among the Andamanese and their relative fatality are unsatisfactory, but so far as I can make out the following is a fair statement of the case in order of importance :— 164

I.—Fevers	45 per cent. of all cases.
II.—Respiratory organs	35 " " "
III.—Digestive organs	15 " " "
IV.—Other diseases	2 " " "

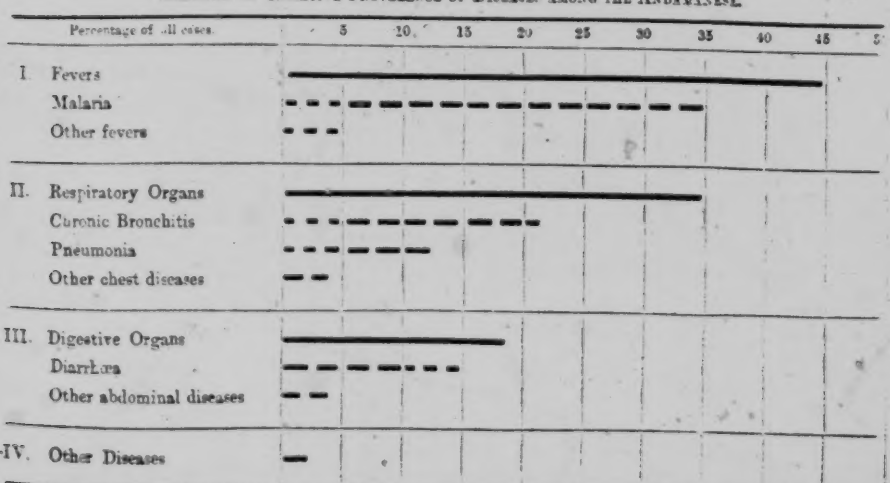
These classes may be further divided up more specifically thus :—

I.—Malaria	40 per cent. of all cases.
Other fevers	5 " " "
II.—Chronic bronchitis	21 " " "
Pneumonia	12 " " "
Other chest diseases	3 " " "
III.—Diarrhœa	13 " " "
Other abdominal diseases	3 " " "
IV.—Other diseases	1 " " "

Without placing too much reliance on the above table, it serves to bring out the fact that among the Andamanese, as among the alien immigrants, malarial fevers are the overwhelming prevalent causes of sickness. As also in the case of immigrants, malarial fevers are not nearly so fatal in proportion to cases as the diseases of the respiratory and digestive organs. Thus I make out that deaths from malarial fevers occur in 8·5 per cent. of the cases, while those from diseases of the respiratory organs in 90 per cent., and of the digestive organs in 74 per cent. These considerations prepare us for the old statement that the prevalent diseases among the Andamanese are climatic and the same as those of the foreign immigrants.

The following diagram brings into clear relief the relative prevalence of diseases among the Andamanese as disclosed by the above tables :—

DIAGRAM OF RELATIVE PREVALENCE OF DISEASES AMONG THE ANDAMANESE.



6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

documented the fact in a number of photographs. The purpose, however, is purely hygienic, an unpainted body is, in their opinion, exposed to certain illness. They explained this belief to me by saying that without paint the body becomes "hot". The men who travelled with me far from women were anxious every day to spread clay on face, chest and limbs, just to avoid "heat" or, in other words, fever. I thought of malaria, but they do not suffer from it. Of this I will speak later on.

Rough clay is applied daily, on infant bodies as well as on adults, for health purposes. It is used to cure all kinds of sickness, together with ochre, turtle fat and honey. Honey spread on wounds appears to hasten healing. Identical curative methods are employed in Oceania. They probably existed among the Tasmanians, and are still used in Australia by the aborigines. I found nothing of the kind in Africa, where honey is plentiful. The Onge consider clay, ochre, honey and turtle fat good for external and internal treatment alike – both preventive and curative. Powdered bees' wax of a dark colour is often added. I saw mothers give their children, as a laxative, a number of pills made of similar ingredients. No bigger than common hazelnuts, the pills are red and greasy. In Onge forests I saw some small excavations, a few feet deep, made to extract the medicinal clay from special ground pockets. In its natural form the clay is light coloured, powdery and free of stones. When it is burnt the colour changes, assuming red, yellow, whitish or black shades according to the different qualities used, all believed to possess healing properties and to ensure hygienic colouring of the body. Mixed as described above, clay is used by the Onge in every circumstance from fever to snake or scorpion bite, constipation, breast infection in women, or post-delivery bleeding.

Belief in the medicinal properties of clay is as old as humanity itself. Even among contemporary European peoples, notwithstanding severe criticism, clay is still honoured as health-giving, not, I must say, on wholly foolish grounds. The Onge, who smear their bodies constantly with clay, have the softest, most velvety skin that I ever saw anywhere in the world. Wounds spread with clay mixed with honey and fat leave negligible scars. The laxative and germ-killing action of clay is admitted by physicians in many countries, including Europe. It never causes infection. Geophagism has ancient origins, and we find it practiced by many modern populations. Children of every race and all young wild animals lick clay instinctively to absorb the mineral salts required by a developing organism. The Onge habit of using clay for healing purposes can be set, therefore, in a very wide frame.

Mental and nervous disorders are rare in Little Andaman. Few natives are subject to epilepsy – an important matter for the Onge: they consider such people as possessed by spirits who speak through their mouths, and respectfully question them as oracles. Several Onge chiefs, such as Chief Tchôtā of Tambē-ē-buiē, are apt to go into trances that have all the appearance of epileptic fits. They were elected chiefs on the strength of their epilepsy!

Constant exercise keeps eyesight and hearing extremely sharp in the Onge. I saw no single case of myopia or presbyopia among the natives, nor

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

on later visits. Dr H. Lehmann found no evidence of syphilis in the fifty-two individuals of both sexes from whom he took blood samples in my presence.

Although the Onges are normally healthy and look outwardly robust, they have very little actual resistance to disease and succumb very quickly. Twenty-eight of them, whole families, young and old, whom I took with me to Port Blair in 1954 to present them to the President of the Republic of India, all developed a high fever owing to the change in their way of life during the few days it took from Little Andaman to Great Andaman, and we had to take them back hastily to their own island immediately after the official visit. Even minor feverish complaints of no importance seem to depress and terrify them so that they die very quickly, and I sometimes heard that young Onge friends whom I had left in excellent health had died suddenly from, so I was told, some febrile complaint. The Onge women have better resistance than their menfolk to disease as a whole, which may also help to explain their greater longevity.

On the other hand wounds heal surprisingly quickly in both sexes, although in some of the old men I saw purulent leg sores, slow to heal even when treated with antiseptics which I applied myself. I saw none of these in women, but they seem to be more severely attacked by ringworm, especially on the abdomen and round the umbilicus. Few of the Onges were free from ringworm but none of them bothered to treat it, and it did not seem to cause them any noticeable disturbance. In one woman I noticed whitish patches on the fingers and lips, due to leucoderma.

Diseases of the nervous system and mental illnesses seem very rare, although a few individuals are subject to attacks of epilepsy, watched reverently by all present! The Onges regard epileptics as possessed by a spirit capable of giving important information and question them like the oracle. A number of the Onge leaders, among them Giota of Tambe-e-buiè, go from time to time into a state of trance, which has every appearance of an epileptic attack. I saw one case of dementia in a middle-aged woman, but it was mild enough to allow her to go about her work reasonably well, and at regular intervals she produced normal children.

Sight and hearing in the Onges are particularly acute, as has often been reported in primitive peoples and attributed to the